

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 31, 2018

The Honorable Thomas D. Homan
Deputy Director and Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Deputy Director Homan,

We, as Members of Congress increasingly concerned by your department's actions earlier this month, write to you requesting a full explanation of your audits of 7-Eleven stores throughout the country that were said to be "follow up" on exercises executed nearly five years ago.¹

Before the crack of dawn on January 10, 2018, 98 7-Eleven stores nationwide were descended upon by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Officers. After this meticulously choreographed, taxpayer-funded operation served to disturb and disrupt many hundreds of 7-Eleven employees and store-owners, of whom were legal residents and citizens attempting to earn a living, your raid resulted in less than 25 arrests of working people on suspicion of being in the country illegally.²

In response and possible justification to public outcry, ICE responded with statements that could only be interpreted by businesses and their patrons as direct threats. You yourself wrote in a statement for ICE that this operation was designed to "send a strong message to U.S. businesses"³ while another top ICE official announced that these visits were "a harbinger of what's to come."⁴

We are deeply troubled by this language.

ICE Officers have a mission to promote homeland security and public safety⁵, *not* to act as an arm of the government designed to intimidate and harass business owners, their employees or their patrons, and *certainly* not to use raids as a threat of "what's to come."

Our country is strong because of the public documents that protect us from threats like those. The fourth amendment to the Constitution specifically affords us, including businesses in our districts, shelter from unreasonable searches and seizures.⁶ Pre-dawn ambushes have no place in our districts, nor in our country.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/10/us/7-eleven-raids-ice.html?mtrref=www.google.com&gwh=5BC8FAD004230687CBF888C51F492AB5&gwt=pay>

² <https://www.apnews.com/cb0ef682ea534ff0b5d31e7c054a079e>

³ <https://twitter.com/ICEgov/status/951177283104133120>

⁴ <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2018/01/10/ice-targets-7-eleven-stores-in-santa-clara-as-part-of-nationwide-operation/>

⁵ <https://www.ice.gov/about>

⁶ <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights-transcript>

Your threats, designed to maliciously terrorize people and businesses, are perhaps most startling when contextualized by the fact that only 21 people were arrested by the end of the exercise. We have trouble seeing how an operation executed in Long Island and Virginia 5 years ago relates to this month's disturbance of nearly 100 stores in 17 states. It seems to us that either your department was given erroneous evidence that you then misjudged and acted upon, or there was no evidence to begin with, and yet you decided to raid these stores anyways.

Regardless of which scenario occurred, the fact is that individuals working in 7-Elevens in California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington State or Washington, D.C. should not be the top priority of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Our limited resources must not be spent to advance a political agenda rather than ensure our security.

We, as concerned Members of Congress, many of whom represent the very communities in which the stores you shook down operate, demand explanation and justification for your department's actions on that day.

We hope that this letter sends you and your department a "strong message" and serves as "a harbinger of what's to come" should your threats against establishments in our communities persist.

Sincerely,



Karen Bass
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



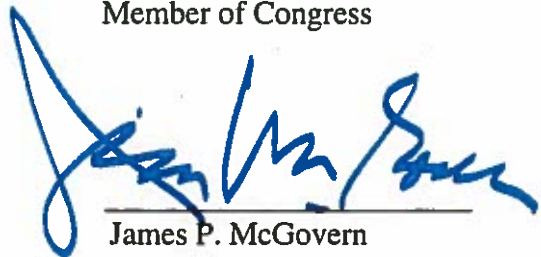
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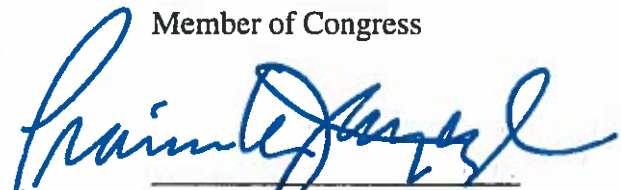

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